(a) the achievements of the 'Dakshin Gangotri' and "Maitri" stations set up in Antarctica; and

(b) the future plan of new Antarctica station and the new programmes for the next five years ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT) : (a) India has set up two permanent stations in Antarctica, namely 'Dakshin Gangotri' during 1983 and 'Maitri' during 1988. Since 1983/1988 the stations have been providing requisite infrastructure facilities for accommodating the wintering and summer teams and for carrying out scientific research in the fields of Atmospheric Sciences and Global change, Earth Sciences, Engineering and Communication Biology and Environment Sciences, etc.

(b) For establishment of another permanent station in Antarctica, necessary reconnaissance survey will be taken up during 2004-05. Some of the new programmes which will be initiated during the next five years include studies on lake biology, Paleoclimate, Antarctic microbes, relation of the Antarctic plate with the Indian plate, telemedicine, clean energy technology etc.

Cleaning up of Sangam

*598. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY :

SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Ganga Action Plan has cleaned up Sangam, the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Saraswati, for a holy dip;

(b) if so, why pilgrims and *sadhus* protested in February, 2003 to take dip on Mauni Amavasya Day; and

(c) the action taken to clean up the bathing ghats of Allahabad and Varansai?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV) : (a) to (c) Under the Ganga Action Plan Phase-I, pollution abatement works like interception, diversion and treatment of sewage, low cost sanitation, bathing ghats development, etc. have been

implemented in Allahabad at a cost of Rs. 30.12 crore. A sewage treatment capacity of 60 million litres per day (mld) has been created in the town. Similarly, in the same phase a sewage treatment capacity of 102 mld has been created at Varanasi. As a result of these works, there is an improvement in the river water quality at both Allahabad and Varanasi. The bio-chemical oxygen demand (BOD) in the river at Allahabad and Varanasi, which is an indicator of pollution, was in the range of 10.1 to 15.5 milligram per litre(mg/l) in 1986 before the start of the Ganga Action Plan Phase-I. This range has improved to 2.5 to 3.8 mg/l in 2002 against the desired standard of 3 mg/l. However, as the present generation of sewage has increased significantly due to increase in population since the implementation of Ganga Action Plan Phase-I, a significant quantity of un-treated sewage is still being discharged into Ganga at both these towns. The works for tackling the remaining pollution load would be taken up in phases in Ganga Action Plan Phase-II, which is under implementation.

The water quality of Ganga at Sangam, Allahabad deteriorated in January and February, 2003 due to coloured discharged of partly treated and partly untreated industrial effluents of distilleries and agro-based industries upstream of Kanpur. After the intervention of the Ventral Pollution Control Board and the State Pollution Control Board, discharge of these effluents was stopped in early March, 2003. The Uttar Peadesh Pollution Control Board has been directed to take action against the defaulting industrial units and to ensure that such industries do not discharge effluents into the river during non-monsoon months and release such effuents after complying with the prescribed discharged standards during monsoon season only.

Prevention of sugarcane pest

*599. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD :

SHRI EKNATH K. THAKUR :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Centre has alerted 16 sugarcane growing States on the outbreak of aphid attack and asked for village level monitoring and feedback to ensure effective plant protection and to take preventive measures;

(b) if so, whether an area of 1.32 lakh hectares of sugarcane crop in Maharashtra and 0.87 hectares in Karnataka were found infested by the aphid pest;